United Nations

Daily Highlights

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General deplores escalating hostilities between Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Bosnian Serbs near Sarajevo; four French UNPROFOR soldiers are wounded, two seriously.

+ During meeting at Headquarters, Secretary-General tells Israeli Foreign Minister that Israel's decision on deportees is "positive first step".

+ Elections for constituent assembly in Cambodia will be held from 23 to 25 May under United Nations auspices.

+ Three Cambodian civilians killed, eight injured in attack in Siem Reap yesterday, according to UNTAC spokesman; Secretary-General's Special Representative for Cambodia to hold talks with French President this evening.

+ Special Representative for Angola appeals to Government and UNITA to agree on truce in Huambo to allow delivery of humanitarian aid.

+ Secretary-General, opening 1993 session of Special Committee on decolonization, says self-determination goals of all peoples have not been achieved.

+ Azerbaijan informs United Nations that Armenian force has seized seven villages in northern part of Upper Karabakh.

+ Total assessment for United Nations regular budget for 1993 is $1.07 billion; 18 Member States have so far paid their contributions in full for this year.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, in a statement issued at Headquarters today, has deplored a major offensive launched today by the forces of the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina against the Sarajevo suburb of Ilidza, abutting the airport.

(more)

According to the statement, the attack was taking place from two directions and heavy artillery was being used. In response, the Bosnian Serb side had been moving tanks into the area to defend its position in Ilidza. The airport was caught in the crossfire and soldiers of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) at the airport were in "alert state red", confining them to their protected shelters. Four French soldiers had been wounded, two of them seriously, and all activities at the airport, which has been kept open by UNPROFOR for humanitarian flights, were now suspended.

The Secretary-General has called urgently on the parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina to cease hostilities and end the continuing cycle of conflict that has already caused too many casualties and inflicted so much destruction. He has further urged the parties to pursue their objectives through negotiation process rather than on the battlefield.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali and Shimon Peres, Foreign Minister of Israel, met this morning to discuss the situation concerning the 400 Palestinians deported by Israel to southern Lebanon in mid-December.

According to a press release issued at Headquarters, Mr. Peres explained his Government's decision of 1 February relating to the deportees. The Secretary-General responded by saying that the decision was a positive action as a first step and that he hoped further steps would be taken by the Israeli Government.

The Secretary-General stated that he has fulfilled the mandate entrusted to him by the Security Council by sending three missions to Israel and presenting his report to the Council. Both Mr. Peres and the Secretary-General stressed the importance of resuming the Middle East peace talks. Mr. Peres expressed his Government's interest in increasing cooperation with the United Nations. The Secretary-General welcomed such an interest.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has informed the Security Council that the elections for the constituent assembly in Cambodia, which will be held under the auspices of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), will be held from 23 to 25 May.

The decision on the dates for the assembly elections was reached at the meeting of the Cambodian Supreme National Council held in Beijing on 28 January under the chairmanship of Prince Norodom Sihanouk. That meeting was also attended by the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Cambodia, Yasushi Akashi, and the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Marrack Goulding.

(more)

The presidential election will take place after the constituent assembly adopts a new constitution for Cambodia.

The Secretary-General had submitted this information in a letter to the Council President, dated 1 February (document S/25273).

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Three Cambodian civilians were killed and eight injured in an attack in Siem Reap yesterday, according to a spokesman for the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC).

The spokesman said today that a progress report indicated that the group of attackers might have been as large as 40 to 50 armed soldiers wearing uniforms of various factions. Several bullets fired during the attack had hit UNTAC buildings and the radar equipment outside.

The identity of the attackers was still unknown. However, there was a theory emerging in Siem Reap that the attacks which had occurred over the last month might be attributable to a group of renegade soldiers from various factions who were banding together, possibly for the purpose of committing acts of banditry.

The spokesman added that President François Mitterrand of France was expected to arrive today for a 24-hour visit to Cambodia. The Secretary-General's Special Representative for Cambodia, Yasushi Akashi, was scheduled to hold talks with the French Head of State tonight.

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Faced with reports of great suffering and destruction in Huambo and other areas of Angola, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Angola, Margaret J. Anstee, has appealed to the Angolan President and to the leader of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) to agree to a truce so that humanitarian aid can be provided immediately.

Thousands of people are reported to be wounded in Huambo, without proper medical assistance. Food and water are reported to be scarce. A truce is vital to permit help to be brought to the wounded and to the suffering civilians.

The Special Representative appealed for orders to be given urgently so that the practical aspects of such a truce can be implemented immediately.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali told the Special Committee on decolonization yesterday, at the opening of its 1993 session, that the goals which had been reached over the past 30 years must not be taken for granted, as peoples, mainly in the Caribbean and the Pacific, still did not exercise their right to self-determination and independence.

Regarding the question of Western Sahara, the Secretary-General said he had held talks with all of the parties concerned, and that his Special Representative for Western Sahara had visited the region several times trying to resolve the difficulties impeding the implementation of a peace plan.

Pointing to other Non-Self-Governing Territories facing similiar problems, the Secretary-General said the positive results obtained by the Special Committee were a good sign that it would be able to propose solutions to resolve problems and help the Territories freely to choose their future status.

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Azerbaijan has informed the United Nations that an Armenian expeditionary force has seized seven villages in the northern part of Upper Karabakh within Azerbaijani territory.

According to a statement by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, Armenia was "continuing its war of aggression against sovereign Azerbaijan" and was not interested in a peaceful settlement of the Armenia/Azerbaijan conflict. Armenia, the statement said, was using the so-called humanitarian aid it was receiving from abroad, not to solve its social and economic problems, "but to continue its aggressive war of conquest against Azerbaijan".

The statement was contained in a letter, dated 8 February, to the President of the Security Council from Azerbaijan's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Hassan A. Hassanov.

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According to a communiqué issued at Headquarters today, the total assessment for the United Nations regular budget for 1993 amounted to $1.07 billion. Eighteen Member States had so far paid their contributions for this year in full.

Those States are: Australia, Botswana, Canada, Denmark, Federated States of Micronesia, Finland, France, Iceland, Ireland, Kuwait, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Singapore and Sweden.

The communiqué said the contributions from the 18 Member States represented $233.9 million or 20 per cent of the total 1993 regular budget assessment. Total assessments issued as of today for peace-keeping operations for 1993 amounted to $681 million. During the month of January, $209 million was received representing payments against current and prior mandate periods, the communiqué said.

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